

A Plan for Creative Placemaking in the South Loop

Final Draft

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

III. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- Who, What, and Where is the South Loop?
- What is the District Vision?
- What is Creative Placemaking?

IV. CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IN THE SOUTH LOOP: BEGINNINGS

NEA Grant Outcomes

Planning Methodology: Learning By Doing

- Stakeholder Engagement Activities
- Capacity-Building Activities
- The Discovery Charrette

Commissioned Demonstration Projects

- Little Box Sauna
- Cross-Pollination Walking Theatre
- At the Convergence of Science and Nature Mural
- Ripple of Life (Postponed Indefinitely)

Additional (Catalyzed) Public Art Projects

- James Brenner Sculpture
- Signal Boxes

Additional Community-Building Activities

- Host/Artist Reception
- Host Network Lunch
- Regional Placemaking Residency

Assessment, Early Successes, and Lessons Learned

V. CREATIVE PLACEMAKING PLAN

Vision and Goals

Getting there: from Present Reality to Future Vision

Momentum Phase

- Governance
- Management
- Budget
- Activities
- Evaluation

Moving beyond Momentum

VI. APPENDICES

- A. Commissioned Demonstration Projects Selection Process and Criteria
- B. Surveys and Evaluations
 - Hosts
 - Placemakers
 - Community
- C. Placemaking Checklist
- D. Summary of Case Studies
- E. Overview of Creative Placemaking Indicators

Acknowledgements

Lead Organizations and Funding

The launch of creative placemaking in the South Loop was funded by an “Our Town” Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), with matching support from the City of Bloomington, Artistry (f/k/a Bloomington Theatre and Art Center), and other partners. The 18-month grant period extended from January 2014 through August 2015.

Lead Partners

Mall of America, McGough, and Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau contributed funds to help Artistry and the City secure the NEA grant and served as lead project partners.

Core Team

A core team met twice monthly to manage the NEA grant-funded period of creative placemaking in the South Loop. Members included:

Rachel Daly	<i>Director of Visual Arts, Artistry</i>
Julie Farnham	<i>Senior Planner, City of Bloomington</i>
Larry Lee*	<i>Director of Community Development, City of Bloomington</i>
Andrea Specht*	<i>Executive Director, Artistry</i>
Jim Urie*	<i>Manager, Bloomington Center for the Arts</i>
Tom Borrup	<i>Principal, Creative Community Builders (CCB)</i>
Peter Musty	<i>Project Manager, Charrette Director (CCB)</i>
Carrie Ann Christensen	<i>Demonstration Project Manager (CCB)</i>

** Also served as Creative Placemaking Advisory Committee member*

Creative Placemaking Advisory Committee

The following advisory committee members met quarterly during 2014-2015:

Jack Becker	<i>Executive Director & Founder, Forecast Public Art</i>
Cynthia Bemis Abrams	<i>Councilmember, City of Bloomington</i>
Bonnie Carlson	<i>President & CEO, Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau (BCVB)</i>
Mark Fabel	<i>Lead Project Manager, McGough</i>
Dan Jasper	<i>Vice President Public Relations, Mall of America</i>
Jason Moore	<i>Board President, Artistry</i>
Randy Walker	<i>Public Artist</i>

Project Hosts (Host Network)

A network of South Loop property owners and stakeholders agreed to be prospective Project Hosts for Demonstration Projects during the NEA grant-funded phase of creative placemaking in the South Loop. Prospective Project Hosts coordinated with the artists, designers, and other creative people who developed and submitted project concepts for jury consideration. The initial host network included:

- City of Bloomington
- Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Cypress Semiconductor*
- HealthPartners
- IKEA*
- JW Marriott
- Mall of America*
- McGough
- Metro Office Park
- Metro Transit
- Metropolitan Airports Commission
- Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*
- RadissonBlu*
- Three Rivers Park District

** Hosted 2015 Commissioned Demonstration Projects*

Placemakers

Artists, designers, and other creative people are referred to as “placemakers” throughout this plan. To select the placemakers who would submit proposals for 2015 Demonstration Projects, the City and Artistry convened a placemaker and project selection committee comprising several Advisory Committee members, City staff, South Loop stakeholders, Artistry staff and other regional arts administrators, and nationally-recognized public artist Randy Walker (also an Advisory Committee member). From among 54 applicants they chose the following 15 placemakers and collaborating groups to submit proposals for Commissioned Demonstration Projects.

- Lisa Berman (In New Company) – Dance
- James Brenner – Sculpture
- Kyle Fokken – Sculpture
- Ashley Hanson and Andrew Gaylord (PlaceBase Productions)* – Theater
- Tom Henry* – Field Artist/Landscape
- Robert Karimi – Food/Theater/Social Practice**
- Amanda Lovelee – Visual/Social Practice
- Shanai Matteson – Video/Social Practice
- Erik Pearson* – Mural
- Marjorie Pitz – Sculpture
- Greg Preslicka – Mural
- Molly Reichert and Andrea Johnson* – Architecture/Sculpture/Social Practice
- Belinda Tato – Social Practice/Events
- Peter Haakon Thompson – Social Practice/Photo
- Karl Unnasch – Sculpture

** Artists selected for 2015 Commissioned Demonstration Projects*

** Social practice artists “freely blur the lines among object making, performance, political activism [and] community organizing, . . . creating a deeply participatory art that often flourishes outside the gallery and museum system.” Randy Kennedy, “Outside the Citadel, Social Practice Art is Intended to Nurture,” *The New York Times*, March 20, 2013.

Executive Summary

NEA Grant and Key Outcomes

In 2013, Artistry and the City of Bloomington collaborated to obtain a \$100,000 NEA “Our Town” grant to (1) commission four to six Creative Placemaking Demonstration Projects and (2) develop a long-term plan to sustain creative placemaking in the South Loop.

Long Range Vision and Goals for Creative Placemaking in South Loop

The vision for creative placemaking in the South Loop is “To establish the South Loop as a distinctive destination known for how it welcomes creative people and uses the arts and design to transform the neighborhood.”

Goals for creative placemaking in the South Loop are to:

1. Enhance the aesthetic quality of the South Loop’s built environment;
2. Activate the South Loop’s physical, social, and cultural environment;
3. Build capacity to sustain placemaking leaders and champions;
4. Engage the South Loop community and stakeholders;
5. Elevate the South Loop’s identity; and
6. Foster the creative sector.

Major Elements of the Momentum Phase

The Momentum Phase will be a two to four-year period when the City and Artistry build on the momentum of the NEA grant-funded phase in terms of stakeholder engagement and establish ongoing governance and management mechanisms to sustain placemaking in the South Loop for many years to come. A Creative Placemaking (CP) Advisory Commission and a Creative Placemaking (CP) Director position will be created within the City, and the South Loop Development Fund will support an annual budget of approximately \$400,000. Artistry will provide artistic services under an agreement with the City.

Moving beyond Momentum

The City and Artistry aspire to expand creative placemaking to all of Bloomington and to broaden the base of funding to include non-public sources. The “Permanent Phase” will incorporate these ideas and reflect lessons learned during the Momentum Phase.

Introduction and Background

Who, What, and Where is the South Loop?

The South Loop District sits at the confluence of two major rivers and has been a crossroads of cultures, commerce, and transportation for millennia. Over the last 150 years, the area’s identity has been shaped by many diverse uses: from military fort reserve and missionary settlement to farming, major league sports, and world-renowned retail and commerce. More recently, a new vision has emerged for the district as a transit-supportive, mixed use neighborhood with walkable streets, attractive public amenities, and a sense of sophisticated urbanism. Public and private sector leaders have collaborated to implement the infrastructure required to support significant new investment.

Bordered in part by the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport (MSP) and the Minnesota River, the South Loop contains a unique mix of features and amenities: the Mall of America, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Visitors Center, the headquarters of corporations such as HealthPartners and Ceridian, numerous hotels, four light rail transit stations, a 1950s-era residential neighborhood, and hundreds of developable acres. The adjacent airport serves as a gateway; connecting Bloomington and the Twin Cities metropolitan region to the world.



What is the District Vision?

In 2012, the City adopted the South Loop District Plan to guide redevelopment of the district over the next few decades. The plan's vision is "to transform South Loop from a dispersed, suburban commercial area into a walkable urban neighborhood that attracts residents, office tenants, hotel guests and shoppers by virtue of its unique character and assets."

To achieve the district vision, the City will pursue five primary goals:

1. Build on the South Loop's unique mix of assets and mitigate its disadvantages.
2. Transform the densities and character from suburban to urban.
3. Accelerate development.
4. Establish a branded place emphasizing sustainability, quality, comfort, and safety.
5. Create a sustainable district.

The district plan recommends that creative people and artists play a driving and central role in transforming the South Loop, and contains a policy calling for the formal and organized exploration of creative placemaking activities.

What is Creative Placemaking?

Creative placemaking is an emerging, interdisciplinary field that leverages the arts, design, and other creative disciplines to build vibrant, distinctive, and sustainable communities and economies.

- ***Creative placemaking is intentional.*** It involves intentional actions to engage artists, designers, and other creative people in building social fabric and local economies while making physical place-based improvements.
- ***Creative placemaking is broad-based.*** It is typically implemented through cross-sector processes and encompasses a broad range of permanent and temporary activities including music, public art pieces, historical tours, streetscape design, cultural and public events, pop-up art, outdoor theater and performances, storefront art, wayfinding, and other creative acts that engage and connect the community to a place.
- ***Creative placemaking builds pride of place and community.*** It values and builds on local assets and distinctive local character to enhance the social and civic fabric of place-based communities.

This document is both a report on creative placemaking activities conducted during the NEA grant-funded period and a plan for the “Momentum Phase,” which will establish the foundation to sustain creative placemaking well into the future in the South Loop and ultimately, Bloomington as a whole.

Creative Placemaking in the South Loop: Beginnings

NEA Grant Outcomes

In 2013, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) awarded Artistry and the City of Bloomington a \$100,000 “Our Town” grant. Artistry, the City, and numerous partners matched the \$100,000 award and used it to develop this creative placemaking plan and commission a series of Creative Placemaking Demonstration Projects during the 18-month grant-funded period.

The grant application outlined several long-term outcomes that NEA funding would help to achieve:

- A more livable, vibrant, and beautiful community for the South Loop’s residents, workers, and visitors.
- A new City development paradigm that integrates art and arts experiences into the design of public spaces and infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, utilities, parks) and private improvements (buildings, signs, parking areas).
- Artistry’s expanded capacity to engage larger and more diverse audiences and to incorporate new disciplines (e.g., public art) into its programming.
- A successful, replicable model for using creative placemaking in a suburban context.

Key objectives of the grant were to:

1. Identify a governance and management structure, and sources of funding to ensure creative placemaking efforts are sustained into the future; and

2. Conduct four to six “demonstration “ projects to:
 - build social fabric;
 - inspire stakeholder investment;
 - test public policies and best practices to integrate creative placemaking into public projects and private development; and
 - begin establishing criteria and processes to ensure artistic integrity and excellence in all commissioned artists and works.

Planning Methodology: Learning by Doing

Artistry and City of Bloomington staff selected the consultant team Creative Community Builders (CCB) to help manage the NEA grant-funded phase of creative placemaking in the South Loop. Together, staff and CCB consultants formed a Core Team that used an immersive, learning-intensive process to achieve the NEA grant objectives.

With guidance from the Core Team, Creative Placemaking Advisory Committee, and placemaker/project selection committee, a diverse set of artists, designers, and other creative people were mobilized to engage South Loop stakeholders and the regional arts community in a wide range of activities. From these activities, the Core Team harvested innumerable lessons about the capacities, attitudes, realities – and the immense possibilities – for creative placemaking in the South Loop. Key activities during the NEA grant-funded phase are summarized below.

Stakeholder Engagement Activities

An early Core Team task was to identify the South Loop’s major stakeholders, including key groups and sub-communities within the South Loop that deserved active roles in creative placemaking. The stakeholder-identification process included historical research and numerous conversations and meetings. A range of communications and outreach activities were then conducted to help stakeholders discover, share perspectives about, and celebrate the South Loop community. For example, promotional materials were designed and published in the community; City and Artistry staff provided updates in the quarterly *City Briefing* and in video productions on the City’s YouTube channel; email lists were created for participants; and a public relations company was contracted to promote the Discovery Charrette (described below).

Capacity-Building Activities

The following activities set a baseline for and began to build Artistry’s and the City’s capacity to implement creative placemaking.

- Test current City regulations and permitting processes as applied to creative placemaking and public art projects.
- Collaborate on projects that required active involvement of Artistry staff, City staff, placemakers, and other South Loop stakeholders.
- Work with new artistic disciplines and artists outside Artistry’s traditional realm.
- Develop and test a variety of placemaker and project selection methods.
- Implement creative placemaking projects as demonstrations of impact and to develop relationships and capacities among Project Hosts, Artistry, City, and others through the process.

The Discovery Charrette

The first Creative Placemaking Demonstration Project was a week-long Discovery Charrette, held in June 2014 and hosted by McGough at Bloomington Central Station Park. The charrette served as the public launch of creative placemaking in the South Loop and addressed five major objectives:

- **Discovery:** Identify and illustrate the history, purpose, and desired identity of the South Loop, building on the vision in the South Loop District Plan.
- **Community-Building:** Form new relationships and strengthen connections among key constituencies and between existing and new partners.
- **Project Site and Concept Development:** Identify a diverse set of sites for future Demonstration Projects and ask the community to generate project ideas for creative placemaking in the South Loop, resulting in a book with 90 entries.
- **Policy Exploration:** Identify links between organizational roles and city policies and regulations related to the Demonstration Project review process, and begin to consider a long range policy framework.
- **Regional Awareness:** Contribute to heightened Metro-wide awareness of: a) the South Loop's potential and the City's vision for it; b) the discovery and creative placemaking activity underway in the South Loop, and c) the upcoming Demonstration Projects.

The Discovery Charrette engaged a variety of South Loop property owners, other stakeholders, artists, and Artistry and City staff. A detailed description of participants and activities is included in Appendix A.

Commissioned Demonstration Projects

Following the Discovery Charrette, a solicitation process was conducted to select placemakers to implement three to five additional Demonstration Projects during 2015. Through a formal, juried selection process, 15 finalists were invited to develop project proposals in partnership with prospective Project Hosts. The projects were designed to:

- demonstrate that creative placemaking projects, including public art, social practice art, and design interventions, would create excitement and visibility for the South Loop;
- strengthen relationships among the City, Artistry, project partners, South Loop stakeholders, and artists and arts organizations;
- test best practices and organizational capacity to sustain creative placemaking; and
- inspire continued stakeholder investment and engagement in creative placemaking.

From the proposals submitted by the fifteen finalists, four projects were selected by the jury for commissions of up to \$20,000. A detailed description of the selection process is provided in Appendix B. The Commissioned Demonstration Projects are described below.

Little Box Sauna

Little Box Sauna is a mobile warming place that created a visible, small-scale, social space within the large spaces of the South Loop. The sauna made two stops in the South Loop during February and March of 2015: in front of the Radisson Blu at Mall of America, and at IKEA. It created a hub where employees and visitors could socialize in a way that is new to our community, based on Finnish and other cultural traditions. It gave people a destination they could see and walk to – a stopping place between buildings and cars.

Placemakers: Andrea Johnson and Molly Reichert
 Hosts: Mall of America, Radisson Blu, IKEA
 More Information: <https://littleboxsauna.wordpress.com>

Cross-Pollination Walking Theater

In partnership with the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, PlaceBase Productions (PBP) turned the grounds of the Refuge into a stage for a walking theater production of an original musical titled “*After the Birds Taught Me to Fly.*” PBP used site-specific musical theater, based on stories collected and research conducted by the artists, to explore the places, resources, and initiatives that make the Refuge a common ground where community members can engage and connect to the surrounding river valley. This community-based theater piece added to the shared understanding of the unique role the Refuge plays in shaping the South Loop’s past, present, and future. Four performances were presented on June 6 and 7, 2015.

Placemakers: Ashley Hanson and Andrew Gaylord (PlaceBase Productions)
Host: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
More Information: <http://placebaseproductions.com/minnesota-valley-national-wildlife-refuge-in-bloomingtons-south-loop/>

At the Confluence of Science and Nature Mural

Erik Pearson created a large, exterior mural at Cypress Semiconductor bordering the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Bass Ponds parking lot. The mural draws inspiration and images from the history of technology and semiconductors in the South Loop as well as the potential of “green” technologies. The mural expresses the unique blend of science and nature that have shaped the neighborhood’s past and will continue to influence its future.

Placemaker: Erik Pearson
Hosts: Cypress Semiconductor and the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
More Information: <http://www.erikpearsonart.com>

Ripple of Life (Postponed Indefinitely)

Field Artist Tom Henry proposed a circular “ripple” landform, 150 feet in diameter, planted with wheat and surrounded by a blue Russian Sage hedge and a half-circle of yellow sunflowers. A large blue reflective globe in the center would represent a drop of water nourishing the field of beauty and sending out the ripple effect. The piece would begin with earth-forming and planting and end with a harvest of wheat to be processed into loaves of bread for Twin City food shelves. Initially scheduled for installation in spring 2015, the project did not proceed past the design phase because of changes in land ownership and schedule and budget constraints. The City and Artistry hope to work with the artist to implement Ripple of Life or a similar project elsewhere in the South Loop in the future.

Placemaker: Tom Henry
Host: Mall of America

Additional (Catalyzed) Public Art Projects

Ideas generated and relationships forged during the NEA grant-funded period led to two additional public art projects commissioned by the City of Bloomington for the South Loop with City funds.

James Brenner Sculpture

This internally-illuminated, glass and steel sculpture set in a swirl of flowering plants occupies the center of

the roundabout at 28th Street South and Lindau Lane. The sculpture is slated to be installed in August 2015.

Signal Boxes

The City's Public Works Department has identified nine signal control boxes in the South Loop to wrap with art in summer 2015. The placemakers whose designs will be used will be selected by the City in consultation with Artistry.

Additional Community-Building Activities

The following activities helped to build and strengthen relationships among the City, Artistry, prospective Project Hosts, placemakers, and other stakeholders during the NEA grant-funded period.

- **Host/Artist Reception and Project Announcement Party (November 2014)** – Hosted by the Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Airport Marriott Hotel, this event included a public announcement of the Commissioned Demonstration Projects and provided an opportunity to recognize and celebrate with all the placemakers, Project Hosts, other partners, and community members – past, present, and future – who are inspired by the South Loop's potential.
- **Host Network and Advisory Committee Lunch (June 2015)** – Hosted by IKEA, this event provided an opportunity for City and Artistry staff to describe the momentum phase plan included below and to generate interest among prospective Project Hosts for continued involvement over the next two to four years.
- **Regional Placemaking Residency Host Site (2014 and 2015)** – During the NEA grant-funded period, the opportunity arose for the City to be a partner in the annual Placemaking Residency, coordinated by the St. Paul Riverfront Development Corporation. Participation provided a unique opportunity to expand regional awareness of the South Loop and the creative placemaking activities launched with the NEA grant. The Placemaking Residency brings world-renowned placemaking experts to the Twin Cities to help community members foster metropolitan growth and evolution in ways that improve economic outcomes for residents and businesses and engage diverse and underrepresented community members, among other outcomes. The residency brings together business leaders, public officials, community activists, researchers, arts groups, entrepreneurs, and neighborhood residents to address the issues of our day.

The South Loop was a host site for events led by the following Placemaking “residents”: in May 2014, Gil Penalosa, creator of the “8/80 Communities” concept; and in May 2015, Gehl Studio and Dr. Richard Jackson speaking on the intersection of public health and urban design.

Assessment, Early Successes, and Lessons Learned

An important objective of the NEA grant-funded period was to assess the impact of various activities to begin identifying the most effective creative placemaking approaches and practices for the South Loop. As part of a multi-faceted assessment process, surveys were conducted with Project Hosts, placemakers, and the broader community. The data gleaned from the surveys are summarized in Appendix C.

From the surveys and numerous opportunities to observe and analyze the impact of activities conducted during the NEA grant-funded phase, the Core Team identified the following early successes and lessons learned.

Early Successes

- Increased stakeholder engagement and stronger connections among South Loop stakeholders.
- Greater awareness of the South Loop vision within Bloomington and the greater Twin Cities region.
- Increased understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of creative placemaking across City departments.
- Greater awareness of strengths and weaknesses of City development and permitting processes relative to creative placemaking activities.
- Expanded understanding within Artistry of the individuals, networks, and processes connected to creative placemaking in our region.
- Increased capacity for collaboration among the City, Artistry, and other partners and stakeholders.

Lessons Learned

- **Demonstration works.** Creative Placemaking Demonstration Projects help establish a distinctive, “branded” place; build civic/social fabric typical of urban places; inspire existing stakeholders and attract new developers to invest in South Loop; and enliven the district and encourage people to explore.
- **This is just the beginning.** Sustaining creative placemaking requires a long-term commitment of resources. It also requires a solid governance and management foundation with access to technical skills and expertise (e.g., legal, PR/marketing). Building this foundation and cultivating champions takes time and diligence.
- **Placemakers and hosts need support.** Navigating the City review and permitting process and other technical requirements can challenge the capacity of individual placemakers and/or project hosts. Providing guidance and support can be critical in facilitating project implementation.
- **Community-building, urban design, and public art are intertwined within Creative Placemaking.** Often, the most compelling and successful development projects draw from different skill sets and a range of professionals.
- **Balance creativity and capacity.** Don’t underestimate what is possible, but don’t over-commit. Creativity should be honored and encouraged at every step, but a realistic assessment of available human and financial resources is equally important.
- **Ensure interdisciplinary leadership.** A diversity of disciplines and professions should be involved in the governance and management of creative placemaking. Major stakeholder groups should also be represented to ensure that investments serve the needs of the community.

Creative Placemaking Plan

The NEA grant provided funding to demonstrate the potential of artists and other creative people to foster community-building in the South Loop; sustaining the latter will require the ongoing participation of the district’s stakeholders. More specifically, transforming the identity and character of the South Loop is possible only by engaging the neighborhood’s property and business owners, workers, residents, and visitors in shaping a distinctive place. This plan builds on the City’s vision for the South Loop and the momentum of the NEA grant-funded period by proposing stakeholder-inclusive management and governance structures, activities, and the funding to implement them.

Vision and Goals

Creative Placemaking Vision

The City's intention to integrate creative placemaking in the redevelopment of South Loop was established in the South Loop District Plan. Accordingly, the district vision is a creative placemaking vision in the broadest sense. Underlying this Creative Placemaking Plan is a more specific vision for the arts as a central, core force in the district's transformation: *sustained creative placemaking efforts will establish the South Loop as a distinctive destination known for welcoming creative people and using the arts to transform the neighborhood physically, socially, and culturally.*

Creative Placemaking Goals

1. URBANISM – *Ensure urban design excellence in transforming the built environment.*

Make sure that private development and public infrastructure support the adopted vision of South Loop as a walkable urban neighborhood and that development is executed with exceptional design, improving the aesthetics and physical distinctiveness of the neighborhood.

2. ANIMATION – *Animate public spaces and strengthen the social and cultural fabric.*

Make the South Loop a destination where people come to explore, gather, linger, and choose to live and invest. As the neighborhood transforms over time, this will require implementing a purposeful, strategic, and sustained range of projects and activities that activate spaces and build community connections in the South Loop.

3. INVOLVEMENT – *Involve and empower people who inhabit and care about the South Loop.*

Involve those who live, work, and own property in South Loop in taking an active role in its transformation. Civic or organizational frameworks for creative placemaking will be successful when they allow the roles and capacities of neighborhood champions to develop based on the needs and activities of constituents and the community.

4. IDENTITY – *Elevate and project South Loop's identity.*

Promote the South Loop in active, strategic, and consistent ways to expand awareness of its location, assets, and future potential within the neighborhood and beyond its boundaries. Developing pride of place and a sense of shared identity will come through the discovery, documentation, and celebration of the South Loop's history and unique assets.

5. LEADERSHIP – *Build capacity to sustain leadership and champions.*

Foster continued engagement of current leaders and champions while actively building and broadening the base of ongoing support and participation in creative placemaking.

6. INVESTMENT – *Establish a resident creative sector.*

Promote creative and cultural activities and attract artists, designers, and other creative people to work, live, and implement projects in South Loop. Work to attract new development, residences, and work spaces catering to the creative sector and continually seek opportunities for shared creative and cultural experiences.

Getting There: From Present Reality to Future Vision

Over the NEA grant-funded period, the City, Artistry, and other partners conducted a range of activities and explorations to better understand how to apply creative placemaking strategies in the South Loop. From these efforts, the partners learned much about the capacities, attitudes, realities, and possibilities affecting future creative placemaking work.

Key insights:

- Sustaining creative placemaking and integrating it into the transformation and community-building processes in the South Loop and eventually City-wide will require a solid organizational structure and dedicated human and financial resources.
- In the meantime, the energy and excitement generated during the NEA grant-funded period cannot be allowed to subside. For creative placemaking to firmly take root, it is critical to leverage and build on this momentum.
- During the early years of transformation in the South Loop and until a stronger fabric of district-based leadership and capacity coalesces, it is necessary that the City, in partnership with Artistry, take the lead in creative placemaking activities, working closely with district stakeholders and constituencies.

Momentum Phase

The Momentum Phase comprises the next two to four years of creative placemaking in the South Loop, starting in late 2015. Described below are governance and management structures for this phase, the sources and uses of funds, and possible activities to be implemented.

Governance

The City Council will establish a Creative Placemaking Advisory Commission. Six members will be appointed by the City Council and three by the Artistry Board. The Commission's duties will be to:

- Establish creative placemaking strategies and an annual work plan.
- Promote and market creative placemaking in the South Loop, the City, and the region.
- Help decide resource use and approve placemaker and project selection methods.
- Maintain relationships with Project Hosts and partners.
- Make annual progress reports to the Council and Artistry.

Management

A management structure is required to execute the strategies and work plans approved by the Commission and to implement and coordinate the activities described below. During the Momentum Phase, the management structure will comprise a part-time Creative Placemaking (CP) Director employed by the City, contracted artistic services provided by Artistry, consultant assistance, and City staff in various departments actively contributing to creative placemaking efforts.

The CP Director will be the primary administrator of creative placemaking efforts in the South Loop. Accountable to the Commission and the City Manager, the CP Director will:

- support and facilitate the Commission’s work;
- develop and administer annual budgets;
- connect creative placemaking to South Loop stakeholders;
- oversee the Artistry contract;
- participate in the selection processes for placemakers and projects;
- hire and manage consultants; and
- engage employees across the City to achieve the goals set forth in this Plan.

The Director will also have primary responsibility for community relations in the South Loop, including raising awareness of the neighborhood’s identity inside and outside its boundaries, connecting the neighborhood’s diverse stakeholders, and engaging the stakeholders in the neighborhood’s development. Lastly, the CP Director will research and pursue private sources of funding to supplement public funds available for placemaking in the Momentum Phase, and work with Artistry, the Commission, and South Loop stakeholders to determine how to sustain creative placemaking after the Momentum Phase in the South Loop and beyond.

The City will contract with Artistry for services necessary to develop and implement permanent and temporary creative placemaking projects, including identifying potential sites and projects, identifying and selecting artists, designers, architects and other creative people (collectively, “placemakers”) for project commissions, supporting placemakers through permitting and other regulatory processes, and facilitating placemaker/Project Host relationships.

The CP Director will secure consultant assistance for certain tasks requiring specialized expertise. Examples of potential consultant services include contract development and review; branding, marketing, and communications; grant-writing; and project evaluation.

The CP Director will partner with Artistry to engage and expand the knowledge base of City Staff involved in development and infrastructure design to ensure that creative placemaking is integrated into the City’s approach to development on an ongoing basis.

Budget

A \$400,000 annual budget will fund creative placemaking in the South Loop during the Momentum Phase. The proposed funding source during the Momentum Phase is the South Loop Development Fund, a portion of the City’s liquor and lodging taxes. Because the proposed funding source is dedicated to the South Loop, creative placemaking during this phase will be South Loop-focused until additional revenue sources are identified.

The City’s long-term intent is to expand creative placemaking beyond South Loop, diversify the funding sources, add staff and consultant capacity, and broaden the enthusiasm for and impact of creative placemaking throughout Bloomington. The budget below covers annual costs for staffing, consultants, project commissions, and associated support costs during the Momentum Phase.

Momentum Phase Budget

COMPONENT	INVESTMENT	NOTES
<u>Commissions</u>		
Major	\$150,000	Comparable to James Brenner sculpture
Minor	\$120,000	Three @ \$40,000 each
Commissions Sub-total	\$270,000	
<u>Miscellaneous Support</u>		
Conservation	\$2,000	
Events	\$6,000	Four/year @ \$1,500 each
Support Sub-total	\$8,000	
<u>Staff</u>		
Creative Placemaking Director	\$45,000	0.33-0.5 FTE
Staff Sub-total	\$45,000	
<u>Contracted Expertise</u>		
Artistry Expertise	\$35,000	
PR/Marketing/Branding	\$25,000	
Legal	\$5,000	
Evaluation	\$12,000	
Contracted Sub-total	\$77,000	
GRAND TOTAL	\$400,000	

Activities

Creative Placemaking activities during the Momentum Phase continue the approach of “learning by doing.” The activities are intended to develop a distinctive and shared identity by employing creative people and practices that build constructive relationships and incorporate features and events drawn from the South Loop’s natural environment and human history. They are also intended to foster a sense of collective responsibility and ownership in the South Loop’s transformation. It is not expected that all the activities listed below will be accomplished during the Momentum Phase. Rather, they represent possible actions that build on the lessons learned during the NEA grant-funded period and advance the plan goals.

Engage stakeholders

- Foster ongoing, coordinated, proactive interactions among South Loop land and business owners, workers, residents, visitors, and other stakeholders.
- Provide opportunities for stakeholder participation in creative placemaking project selection and other community-building activities, such as:
 - guided neighborhood tours and organized explorations
 - launches and unveilings
 - celebrations
 - contests/competitions

Build leadership capacity

- Cultivate a network of engaged prospective Project Hosts through:
 - e-newsletters and other periodic communications
 - active and passive use of social media

- happy hours and other networking events
- awards/recognition of individuals
- formal membership
- Organize and host leadership events, such as:
 - panels and discussions
 - collaboration and engagement with other entities in the region on creative placemaking initiatives (i.e., annual Placemaking Residency)
- Develop resources and structures to support placemakers and Project Hosts, such as:
 - placemaker database/roster
 - roster of prospective selection jury members
 - checklists/other tools to guide placemakers through public processes related to permits, etc.
 - training for hosts working with placemakers

Commission projects

- Identify and recruit prospective placemakers
- Develop contract administration procedures
- Establish policies and best practices for conservation and maintenance of public art
- Raise funds (e.g., through grants and sponsorships) and encourage private commissions to supplement public funding available for commissions and other creative placemaking activities

Elevate and project South Loop's identity

- Initiate strategic public/media relations to inform region about South Loop and creative placemaking activities
- Coordinate with other regional entities on creative placemaking initiatives (e.g., annual Placemaking Residency)
- Develop brand standards, website, and dedicated social media channel to build awareness of South Loop and foster interaction among South Loop stakeholders
- Engage placemakers in creating unique, memorable signage and other landmarks to facilitate way-finding and reinforce neighborhood identity
- Implement a social media campaign targeted at primary stakeholders, containing event calendars and other opportunities for both on-line and in-person participation

Animate public spaces and strengthen the social and cultural fabric - celebrations and special events

- Organize community events around project launches and unveilings
- Commission placemakers to design active, socially-engaging projects that add opportunities for interaction and collaboration among land and business owners, workers, residents, and visitors
- Encourage and facilitate temporary/seasonal art installations
- Encourage themed events and celebrations that introduce energy and liveliness in strategically important places (e.g., markets on Lindau Lane; Park(ing) Day events using American Boulevard east of 34th Ave; performances in BCS Central Park)
- Explore partnerships with existing Bloomington events and organizations that could take place in the South Loop

Transform the built environment – public and private development/infrastructure/walkability

- Identify key sites for public art and other design interventions
- Engage placemakers in creating unique, memorable signage and other landmarks to facilitate way-finding and reinforce neighborhood identity
- Ensure CP Director/Artistry participation in design review of all proposed South Loop projects (including all public infrastructure improvements and private development projects) to seek

opportunities to advance the creative placemaking goals of this plan – see Appendix C: Placemaking Checklist

- When possible and practical , include creative professionals, experienced public artists, and urban designers in the early, mid-stage, and final review processes
- Use opportunities to incorporate public art into public infrastructure (i.e., utility box wraps, creative pedestrian-crossing identification)
- Encourage private property owners/developers to create building frontages that form active, safe, and walkable streets and spaces, and to incorporate public art in their sites and buildings

Attract new development and foster the creative sector

- Experiment with new, proactive strategies to recruit developers interested in carrying out the district plan's goals
- Facilitate development of artist housing, live/work, and studio space for artists and other creative people
- Participate in the City's budgeting for incentives to foster the creative placemaking vision

Evaluation

Formal and informal evaluation methods will be key to determining which creative placemaking activities and approaches most effectively achieve the goals in this plan and how creative placemaking activities can be improved as the City moves beyond the Momentum Phase. The CP Director is responsible for recommending evaluation approaches to the CP Advisory Commission and including evaluation in reports to the City Council and Artistry Board, using consultant expertise as required. Appendix F contains an overview of creative placemaking indicators.

Moving Beyond Momentum

During the Momentum Phase, the City, Artistry, and other partners will continue learning which creative placemaking activities and approaches work best in achieving the South Loop vision. Equally important, they will develop a deeper understanding of the extent and type of human and financial resources required to sustain placemaking over the long term, and how these resources can be best organized and deployed.

Moving beyond the Momentum Phase involves several aims:

- **Create new paradigms** so creative placemaking is fully integrated into the City's approach to development and community-building.
- **Reach larger, more diverse audiences** for arts and culture programming within the City by literally taking art to the streets.
- **Enhance the whole city** by expanding creative placemaking efforts and funding to all of Bloomington.
- **Ensure long-term stability** by creating governance, management, and funding structures that allow Bloomington to sustain and expand creative placemaking activities for decades to come.
- **Identify and engage cross-sector champions** who understand the power of creative placemaking to build social fabric and establish distinctive community identity.

The insights developed during the Momentum Phase will inform planning for creative placemaking in the South Loop and City-wide and will provide a basis for future refinements of activities, governance, management, and funding. The case studies in Appendix E describe a range of potential models that the City

might adopt or adapt in moving beyond momentum. These models could include one or more of the following:

Related to management and governance:

- Special service districts/business improvement districts (BIDs)
- Neighborhood or voluntary business associations/nonprofits
- City-sponsored neighborhood improvement organizations and districts
- Public/nonprofit partnerships formalized as councils and other entities

Related to funding and incentives:

- Development flexibility
- General fund allocations
- Sign revenue sharing
- Percent for art ordinances
- Special assessments
- Corporate sponsorships
- Grants from various governmental entities and foundations

Suggested practices to be explored and potentially adopted during and beyond the Momentum Phase include:

- **Interdisciplinary Jury.** When placemaker/project selection juries are used, ensure that they reflect cultural and sector diversity and engage key stakeholders as well as those with artistic and technical expertise.
- **“Host Network” Development.** Continued outreach and engagement of current and new Project Hosts is crucial to fostering their ongoing participation in creative placemaking projects and activities. This core of stakeholders serves as the foundation for long-range community-building.
- **Permit/Project Review Facilitation.** Navigating the City’s permit review process can be challenging. Establish a point person to facilitate the movement of atypical “development” projects through the City’s review process.
- **Checklist of Placemaking Principles.** A proposed set of basic guidelines or principles is described in Appendix D. These will be tested and refined. These principles can act as a checklist by which proposed projects can be judged fairly. This list of principles can also be used as an educational tool and as a metric for projects, both public and private.
- **Placemakers Roster.** Develop a database of creative placemaking professionals (including but not limited to public artists, designers, event organizers or social practice artists, performers and graphic artists, muralists, or other creative professionals). Membership would require periodic renewal and would include several benefits including increased access to Project Hosts and invitation to host network events and invitation or inclusion in South Loop events.
- **Arts Organization Involvement.** Provide opportunities to integrate arts programming produced by Artistry in various media, as well as the programming of other arts organizations based in Bloomington and surrounding communities.
- **Project Documentation.** Continue investing in professional documentation of creative placemaking projects through various media such as photography, videography, and thorough written coverage by paid professionals.